

Remarks by the ECOWAS Delegation at the 4th Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in Tokyo, Japan from 20-24 August 2018

Mdm Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, the ECOWAS Commission Delegation brings you greetings from the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Mr Jean-Claude Kassi BROU, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, General Francis BEHANZIN and the Management who are not able to be here to attend this conference.

On behalf of the 15 member states, namely, the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Nobushege TAKAMIZAWA on his appointment and the Government and people of Japan for successfully getting the hosting rights to this conference. We congratulate the vice-presidents, thank the working groups for simplifying our and acknowledge the great facilitation of the Conference by the Secretariat

Mdm Chairperson, delegates, in its plans to implement the ATT, ECOWAS cannot but be guided by the experiences it has gathered over time in the implementation of its own Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, a precursor to the ATT. It is important to observe that both the Convention and the ATT are influenced by the same spirit, little wonder then that in their letters are to be found many common provisions such as universalisation, prohibitions, database development, border control, stockpile management, import/export criteria, brokering, and international assistance. Put together, the two instruments both reinforce and complement one another including and especially in the categories of weapons that they cover. In addition, the ATT provides the global reach and support needed to optimize the gains arising from the implementation of the Convention.

In this regard, ECOWAS Commission identifies with Japan and other countries that have showed support to the Universalization of the Treaty and its imminent implementation.

ECOWAS Commission wishes to recall that working with member states, the Civil Society, namely the West African Action Network on Small Arms, and with funding support from the United Kingdom delivered ratifications of 13 out of 15 MS in the region within three years of the entry into force of the Treaty. Even today we got word of the ratification by Guinea Bissau and confirmation that its instrument will be forwarded soon to the Secretariat. ECOWAS Commission shall endeavor to deliver the outstanding ratification and forge ahead with implementation for which there is already a framework that we can tap into.

Mdm. Chair, ECOWAS is beneficiary of international assistance as matter of course because formation of partnerships is one of the strategies it deploys in the implementation of the Convention and by extension, the ATT. In concrete terms,

ECOWAS Member States and the Commission are beneficiaries of the 10th and 11th EDF with portions of them dedicated to the fight against the illicit proliferation of SALW which the ATT has broadened to include all Conventional Weapons. ECOWAS Member States are benefitting from the German Government through BICC support in physical security and stockpile management and the platform of the Africa Union Germany Partnership in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns by 2020, a component of the Agenda 2063. Database development for arms used in peacekeeping operations is being supported by the Small Arms Survey, the establishment of national registers is supported by UNSCAR funding accessed in conjunction with the Conflict Armament Research. Switzerland is supporting ECOWAS in the Management of Ammunition Stockpile and in the establishment of a Library on Small Arms to support research and scholarship in this area.

In closing, ECOWAS wishes to acknowledge the support provided by Japan in years past towards the fight against the proliferation of SALW including support to our Centres of Excellence such as the KAIPTC, in Ghana and looks forward to staying engaged with Japan and its other international partners in this global agenda set by the ATT.

Finally, ECOWAS wishes conference delegates fruitful deliberations so that our world could be a safer place to live in. Permit me to inform distinguished delegates that ECOWAS will host a side-event at lunch time tomorrow and details will be announced.